and full dress on a cushion, the centre of the crowd of people who have been invited for feasting, to have the ears pierced with a gold pin and after this always to wear diamond ear-rings, but the ceremony has no deeper significance than that the parent feels he has done the best for his daughter at this stage of her life. The shinbyu, however, is much more than a social event. It has a religious meaning of the fullest beauty.

Although the women of Burma figure as actively and have the same rights as men in the fields of business, property, and professions of the modern world, we always keep alive in us the religious feeling that we are "below" mankind. It is not so much a feeling that women are a lower race as that a man has the nobility of manhood in him. We call it *hpon*, the glory, the holiness of a man, and we respect this not with subservience but with the same feelings as we respect monks and parents. A wife does not throw her longyi across her husband's bed, she does not touch any of his possessions with her feet in carelessness, she uses a separate mug for her bathwater. A bad wife who does not respect her husband's manhood does him the greatest harm, for a man cannot prosper if his hpon is hampered; indeed, some women who indulge in black magic deliberately *hpon-nein* their husbands, that is, lower his hpon by carelessly wielding brooms above his head, throwing women's longyis on his pillow, thus making him subordinate, and believing that this makes the wife's will prevail over the husband's. But such a man can never make progress in his career.

It is the Buddhist belief that the attainment of a perfect life is as a man, as shown in Gautama Buddha's life as Prince Siddhartha. Prince Siddhartha was the son of King Suddhodana, who surrounded his son with all the luxury and splendour that his kingdom on the slopes of the Himalayas could offer. To prevent his son from renouncing his princely life for one of poverty and meditation he kept all sights of sorrow, sickness and decay hidden from him. He found him a perfect wife, beautiful, meek and affectionate, who bore him a son; but the prince in his excursions to a park in the city came across a decrepit old man, a sick old man and a corpse, which sights made him sad at the thought of human misery in this world. The next time, however, he saw a hermit which suggested that peace of mind was achievable by renunciation of the vanities of the world. On the night that his son was born, Prince Siddhartha made the Great Renunciation and left everything to go into solitude and find out the cause of misery, and the means of its removal. The Dhammapada says of the world:

> Come! behold this world which is like a decked royal chariot, wherein the foolish immerse themselves; but for the wise there is no attachment.

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593 husband's kinfolk. Post-marital residence is independent and is decided very
[591] largely on the basis of economic opportunity. The wife's opportunities for social intercourse with her family of orientation are, of course, greatest when residence is established in her home village; if, however, a couple from different villages marry and find it most opportune to settle in the husband's community, the
[574] chances are that the wife will maintain contact with her family of orientation by
[582] visits from time to time; such marriages seldom unite persons from villages that are very far apart. The very structural features of bilaterality and absence of extension militate against inequality and male domination.

562 Burmese culture is frequently remarked for the equality of the sexes, in con-
593 trast to the neighboring cultures of India and China. This status of the sexes seems to be the resultant historically of two patterns of thought. One is an apparently very old, pre-Buddhist emphasis upon equality, involving equal inheri-
[428] tance, equal sharing of the property brought to the marriage, equal division of
[586] property upon divorce, a prominent female role in social and economic life, and an absence of transmission of surnames. The other thought pattern dates from the superimposition of Buddhism upon older Burmese conceptions: whatever
[177] ideas of male superiority exist in Burmese life stem from Buddhist notions of
[775] reincarnation. Although Buddha never expressed himself explicitly on the matter, it is taken for granted that only a male can attain Nirvana, since Gautama Buddha, who attained that state, was a male.

462 In the family household the wife's role includes not only such routine tasks as
592 the preparation of food and serving of meals, keeping the house orderly and clean, and looking after small children; very often it involves control of the family income and the making of all important decisions as to expenditures.

593 Certain observances and taboos, reflective of deference to males, are expected
● 784 of the female partner in marriage. She is careful that her lower garments do not touch her husband's bed or his personal belongings; she avoids touching her husband's head. It is believed that the breaking of such taboos may ruin the husband's success and glory, especially his spiritual attainments. These injunctions are followed as a matter of course by Burmese wives and will be broken deliberately only as an act of spite by a woman who wishes to harm or lower her husband for some reason.

593 Despite the various equalitarian aspects of husband-wife relations, there is
837 a tendency towards a double standard of sexual behavior. A husband who has reason to believe that his wife is engaging in extra-marital affairs is very likely
[586] to display violent anger, beat her, and break up the marriage. The wife of a

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888 To the Burmese, long life is a great blessing and an indication of merit earned. Long life is prayed for and old age greatly idealized.

The ideal aged person is one who has successfully reared a family, has grandchildren and a certain amount of material wealth. The aged are expected to be 887 retiring and unobtrusive in their behavior. They do not go out visiting very much; they eat less food; and avoid appearing too well dressed or jeweled when attending religious observances.

An attitude of resignation characterizes the outlook of the aged person in Burmese society. It is unheard of that aged people should work: a possible ex- [622] ception is the village headman, who, it is felt, should be a person of long experience. When aged people live with their children they assume the role of teachers of their grandchildren. Most of the time of elderly people is spent in activities centering around the pagodas and monasteries, organizing of religious festivals, and raising funds for the monks and charities. In fact, they take leading roles in such activities.

The elderly members of the household arise early to see that rice is cooked for the daily offering to the monks and to insure that the household altar is properly looked after. It is preferable for them to arise before dawn, for to do so is considered very meritorious.

● [784] Certain of the taboos that apply to younger people, mostly those connected with death, do not apply to the aged.

761 *Death and Funeral Observances.* To the Burmese, the decline of the human body is part of the inevitable course of nature. When this occurs the soul must [775] leave. The butterfly is the symbol of life: when a person dies, "the butterfly leaves his body."

763 When death approaches, valuables, such as jewelry, are removed from the person and the death-bed, because people are reluctant to use anything with which a person dies. These things are given to the monastery. A relative chants as the person is dying, to fix his mind upon the truths of Buddhism and to divert it from worldly goods and ties of kinship.

764 As soon as death has occurred, everyone present cries and wails. Before rigor mortis sets in, relatives bathe the corpse, using a new water pot for the purpose and pouring the water over the body from foot to head, the opposite direction from that practiced by the living. If the water pot must be refilled at all, this [801] must be done an odd number of times. The pot is then put outside the house, upside down, and anyone outside the family of the deceased may take it. Then